



Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission

April 18, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UPPER VALLEY LAKE SUNAPEE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION SELECTED FOR \$1.18 MILLION GRANT TO SUPPORT TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCE PROJECTS WITH TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION IN NH AND VT

On Monday, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced the selection of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) as a recipient of a \$1,188,443 Thriving Communities Regional Pilot Capacity Builder grant. In partnership with Two Rivers-Ottawuechee Regional Commission (TRORC), UVLSRPC will use these funds to support under-resourced and disadvantaged communities in identifying, developing, and delivering transportation projects to achieve locally-driven economic development, health, environment, mobility, and access goals. These communities include Acworth, Charlestown, Enfield, Goshen, Lebanon, Lempster, Orford, and Plainfield in New Hampshire; and Bethel, Granville, Hancock, Hartford, Hartland, and Royalton in Vermont.

Through the grant, UVLSRPC and TRORC will increase capacity in the Upper Valley Region via two Resilience Coordinators who support resilience planning and technical assistance with a long-term goal of peer-learning and capacity building across the states. The 14 communities committed to participate in this pilot program have been devastated by increased precipitation events and flooding that has greatly impacted the transportation network, the local and regional economy, and access to services and healthcare during times of emergency. The Resilience Coordinators will contribute knowledge to municipalities and enable a more community-based approach to improving flood resilience of transportation infrastructure.

UVLSRPC and TRORC were identified as best suited to support the work in this proposal as experts in climate resilience and transportation planning with decades of experience in quantitative, data-driven rationale of community needs. The commissions also hold long-term relationships with state agencies and individuals in the towns they serve, providing a qualitative window into the daily struggles of rural, isolated communities with disadvantaged transportation systems. According to Peter Gregory, Executive Director of TRORC, “We are pleased to be

partnering on another important initiative with UVLSRPC. Both organizations are committed to improving the safety and quality of life for the region's residents.”

The DOT Thriving Communities Program supports two years of no-cost technical assistance to disadvantaged communities. The program's National Capacity Builder grant aids communities assigned by DOT, and the Regional Capacity Builder grant, of which UVLSRPC is a recipient, enables participants to provide Thriving Communities Program activities to communities at a state or regional scale. The program is part of the Justice40 Initiative and interagency Thriving Communities Network, supporting access to funding and resources provided by the President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

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